The area between Flores and Edison Streets is marked by single-family and multi-family residential buildings. The single-family homes are one to one-and-a-half stories high with well landscaped front yards, attached garages, wood siding, and gabled roofs. Interspersed between single-family homes are multi-story apartments and condominiums dating from the 1960s and 1970s. These buildings typically sit over parking and vary in size from larger projects to buildings confined to a single-family-sized parcel.

Pedestrian-scaled development on 25th Avenue.

Buildings on El Camino Real north of 31st Avenue are the most varied, ranging from recently built strip malls oriented perpendicular to the street, to small, independent retail and service buildings. Starting with a cluster of compactly built buildings around 25th Avenue, the scale and form of development gradually becomes more auto-dominated from the northern section of the Station Area to the south. As El Camino Real is a major regional arterial, the buildings and land uses along it reflect the desire to move traffic efficiently. As Figure 2-6 shows, parking lots account for more than half the street-level activity along El Camino Real, with instances of large, adjacent parking lots on separate parcels. Commercial buildings, both in their architectural features and layout of the site, are designed to serve a driving clientele. Buildings such as furniture stores, fast food restaurants, and auto services have side main entrances, opening into parking lots, and large monument signage that is visible to cars moving at a fast speed. Some buildings are directly adjacent while others have a side setback.

In contrast to the consistency of 25th Avenue, El Camino Real exhibits an inconsistent "street wall" where a pedestrian is likely to be impeded by driveways, gaps in development, vacant lots, and inconsistent building typologies.

The Hillsdale Shopping Center marks the southern end of the Station Area. Its form and function is characterized by typical mall development formula. A central, enclosed complex of shops oriented to an interior circulation system is surrounded by either parking lots or a parking structure, including a large block-length, two-level parking structure fronting El Camino Real from 31st Avenue to Hillsdale Boulevard.

3. Parcel Sizes

Parcels vary widely in size and shape in the Station Area, as shown in Figure 2-7. This can present development challenges on key parcels. Some parcels are narrow and long while others have long frontages along the street but lack depth. Parcels that are oddly shaped or are too small for a prototypical building type will likely need to be combined with other parcels in order for new development to take place.

Figure 2-6: Building Footprints and Parking

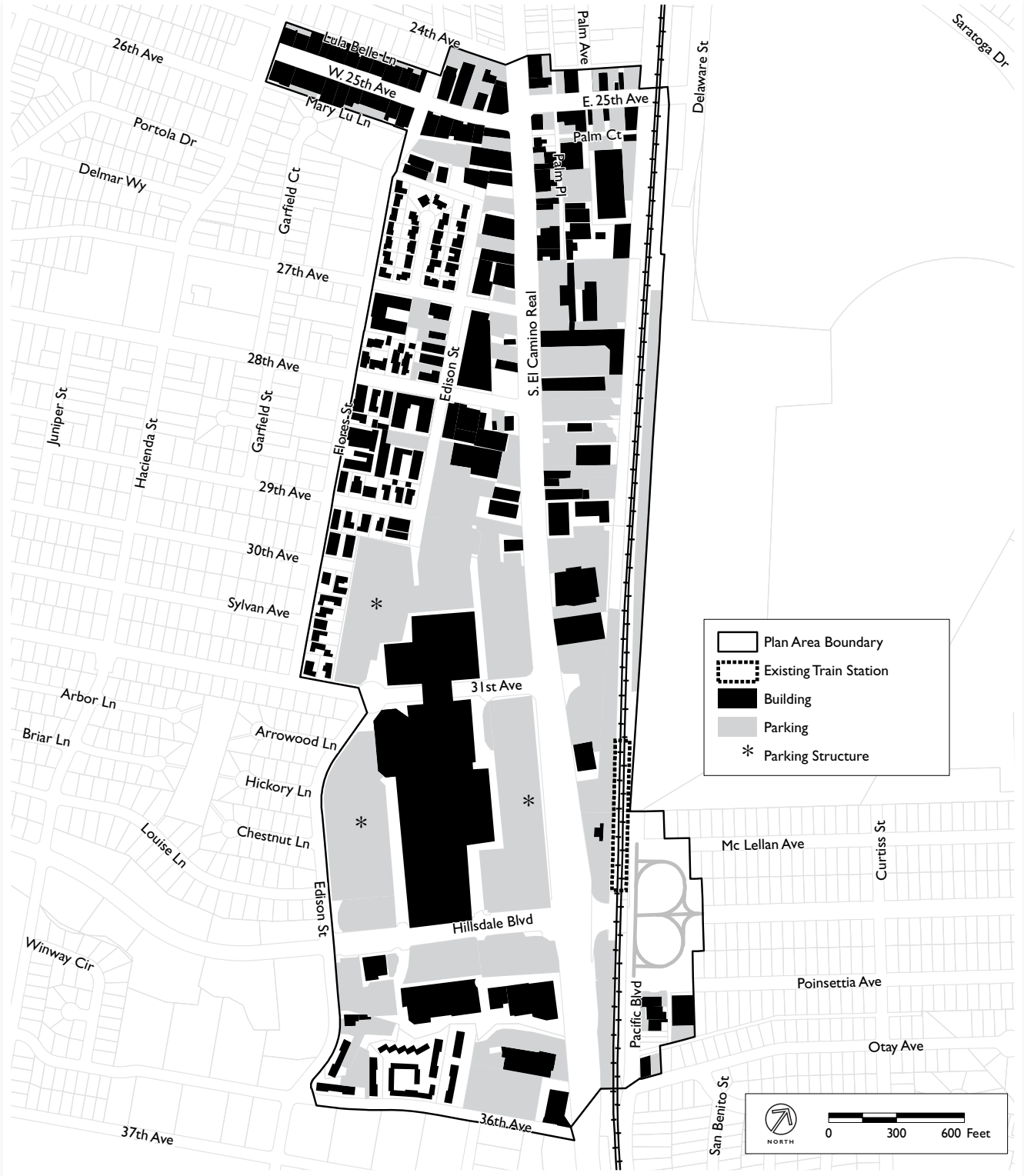
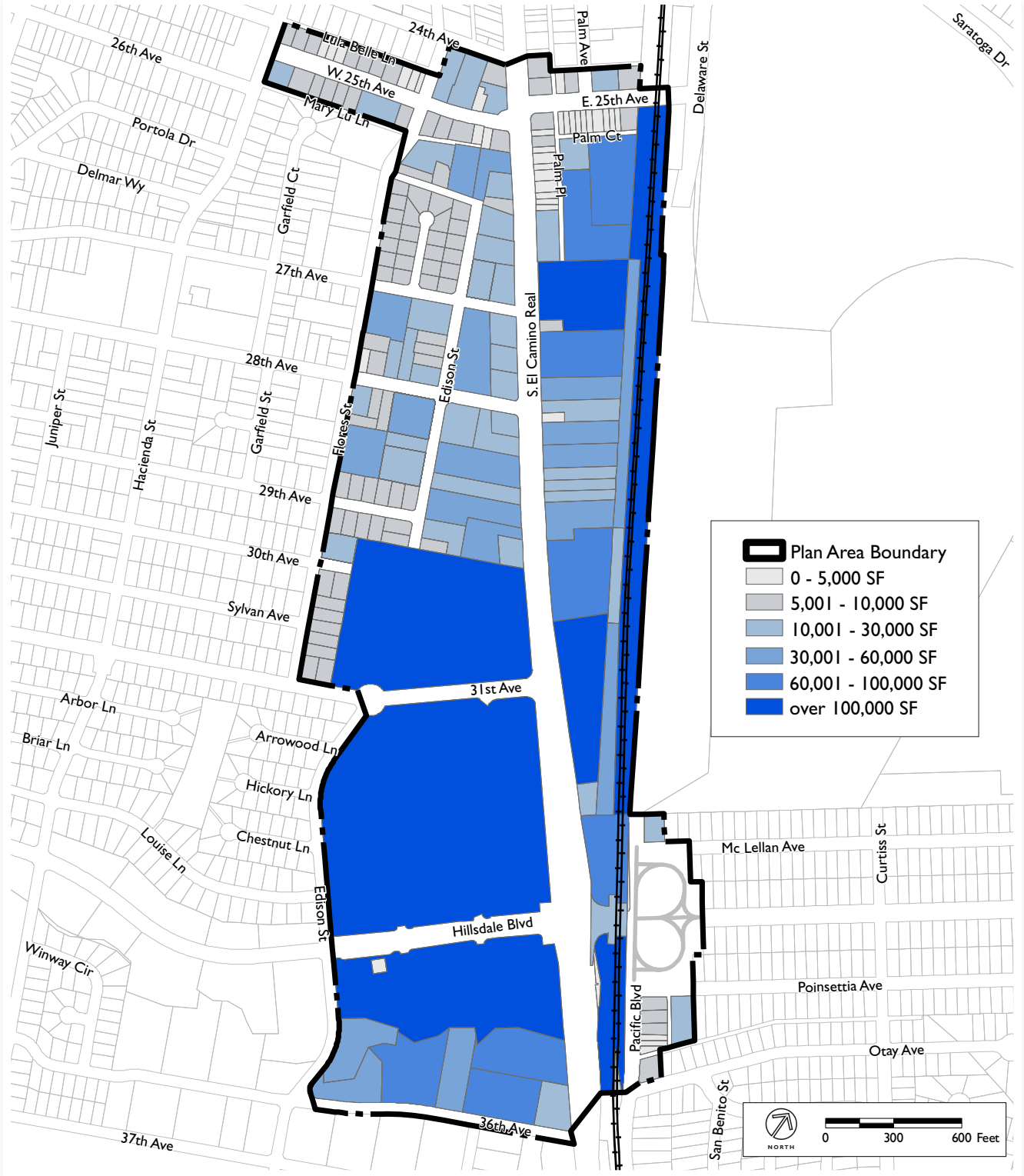


Figure 2-7: Parcel Size

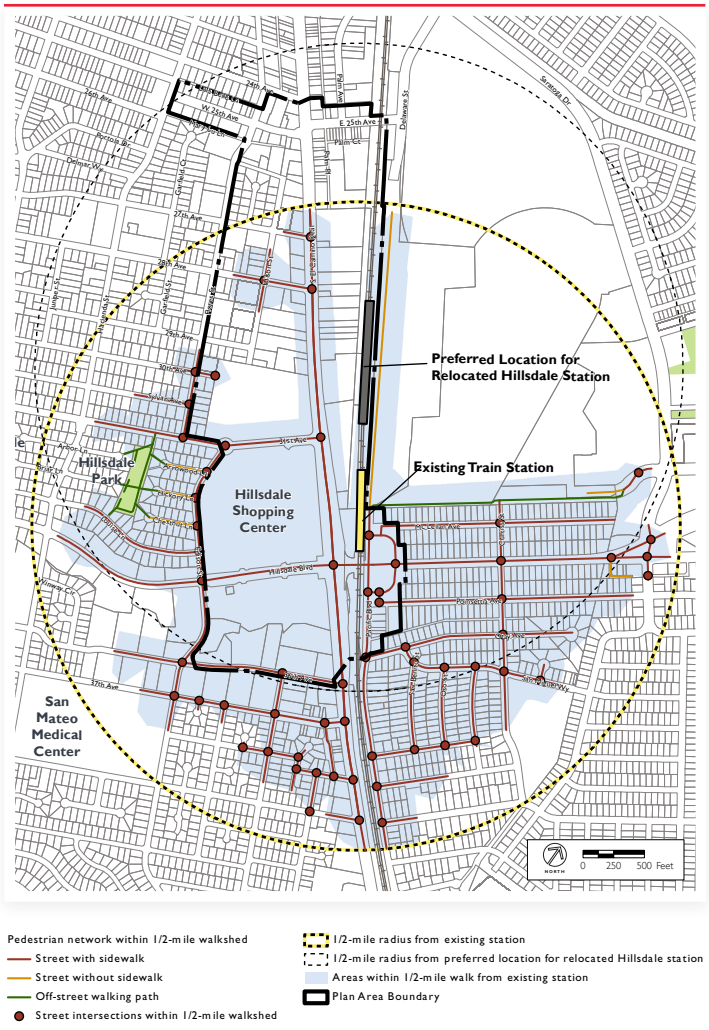


4. Walkability

Walkability is a measure of how conducive a place is to walking. If a place is very walkable, there are more opportunities for healthy recreation and sustainable transportation. Neighborhoods are considered highly walkable when they have destinations such as stores and services, public facilities, and parks in close proximity combined with a network of sidewalks and intersections that are evenly dispersed in a grid.

A walkability analysis of the Hillsdale Station Area provides a more detailed evaluation of a ½-mile walk distance around the Hillsdale Caltrain Station. Traditionally, a ½-mile radius around a transit center, roughly a 10-minute walk, marked the extent to which a pedestrian is willing to walk before choosing a different mode of transportation, such as bicycling or driving. However, this circular parameter can be misleading as it is a 'crow-fly' distance and does not account for interruptions or barriers in the grid pattern of street networks, long, uninterrupted boundaries, and other network gaps.

Figure 2-8: Walkability Existing



Figures 2-8 and 2-9 show two conditions: walkability around the existing Hillsdale Caltrain Station (Figure 2-8) and walkability around the preferred relocated station just north of 31st Avenue (Figure 2-9).

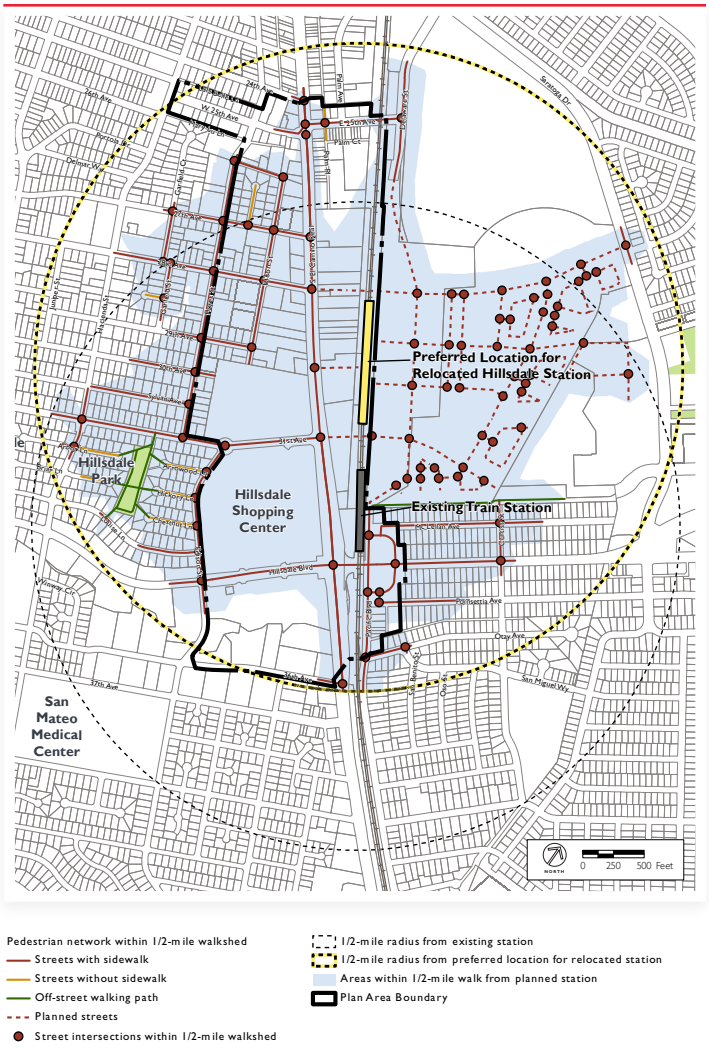
Figure 2-8 (Existing) shows that all parcels south of 31st Avenue in the Station Area are within a ½-mile walking distance of the train station. The San Mateo Medical Center and Hillsdale Park, southwest and west of the Station Area respectively, are also reachable within a ½-mile walk. North of 31st Avenue, most of the Station Area, except El Camino Real, is not within a ½-mile walking distance. The pedestrian circulation for the current station is presently oriented to the southern section of the platform, causing many pedestrians to take a roundabout route to reach the northern section of the Station Area. As a result, even though the northern portion of the Station Area contains more intersections, most of them are not reachable within a ½-mile walking distance. Furthermore, Bay Meadows Phase II, to the east of the Caltrain tracks, is currently unwalkable due to the lack of a street network.

Figure 2-9 shows the ½-mile walkshed for the preferred location for the Relocated Hillsdale Station, which would be approximately 1,000 feet north of the existing station. The walkshed shifts north, making many areas north of 31st Avenue to be reachable within a ½-mile walking distance. The analysis also accounts for the future street network proposed for Bay Meadows, which would be within the walkshed. The blue area in Figure 2-9 is larger than that in 2-8, indicating the expanded walkshed due to the location of the station and a new road network. One important change is that the foot of the 25th Avenue commercial district is walkable from the relocated station, according to this analysis. However, this northward shift distances the San Mateo Medical Center from the walkshed. Although the southwestern-most portion of the Station Area would not be within a ½-mile walking distance, a greater portion of the overall Station Area would be "walkable" from the relocated station.

Specific issues regarding individual streets and barriers will be discussed below in the Pedestrian Circulation and Connectivity section.

The figures show the traditional ½-mile walking radius from the existing train and relocated stations as a dashed line highlighted in yellow. The actual Station Area "walkshed" is shown in blue. This blue area represents the portion of the Station Area that is within a ½-mile walk from the existing station, accounting for street pattern, intersections, and walking paths in parks. The red lines depict sidewalks, yellow lines are streets without sidewalks, and green lines are walking paths. The figures also show the Station Area boundary in black.

Figure 2-9: Walkability Potential



E. Circulation and Transit

1. Existing Roadways

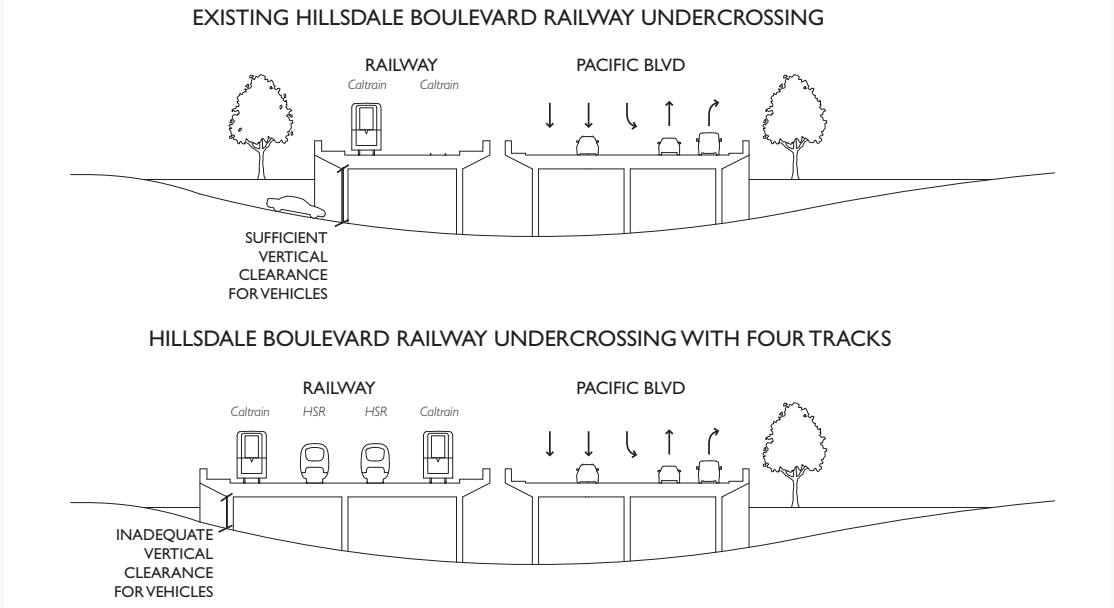
The existing vehicular circulation network is comprised of State highways, city arterials, collectors, local streets, and alleyways. Regional vehicular access to the Station Area is provided via Highway 101, State Route 92, and State Route 82 (El Camino Real). These facilities are shown in Figure 2-10.

Figure 2-10: Existing Roadway Network

2. Planned Undercrossings and Station Relocation

There are significant improvements to the circulation network planned as part of the Bay Meadows Phase II project that will improve grade separated east-west access over the railway in the Station Area. 28th Avenue, a collector, and 31st Avenue, an arterial, which do not currently extend east of El Camino Real, are planned as grade-separated railway crossings that will connect through the Bay Meadows Phase II project site to Saratoga Drive and Highway 101. 25th Avenue is also planned as a grade-separated railway crossing in its current location. The City's strong consistently stated preference is that these grade-separated railway crossings result in relocation of the Hillsdale Station between 28th and 31st Avenues, as is called for by this Plan. As shown in Figure 2-11, the current configuration of Pacific Boulevard and the Hillsdale Boulevard undercrossing are not supportive of two additional tracks required for a Baby Bullet bypass or High-Speed Rail. In order to get four tracks on the same elevation, the Hillsdale station platforms are recommended to relocate north between 28th and 31st Avenues in order to accommodate the minimum vertical clearance for undercrossing traffic. Because the design of the Baby Bullet bypass and High-Speed Rail is at a preliminary phase, the City will need to work with the transportation agencies on a final configuration for the railway.

Figure 2-11: Hillsdale Boulevard Railway Underpass Relationship to High-Speed Rail



3. Bicycle Facilities

The City of San Mateo is currently developing a Bikeways Master Plan, which will analyze bicycle counts and inventory and recommend bicycle network improvements. Currently, bicycle circulation within the City of San Mateo is provided through an extensive system that is not well connected. A number of Class I, II, and III bikeways exist and are planned within the vicinity of the Station Area. Existing and planned bikeways are shown in Figure 2-12. A detailed discussion of planned bikeways in the Station Area can be found in Chapter 6, Transportation.

Pedestrian environment on El Camino Real.

4. Pedestrian Circulation and Connectivity

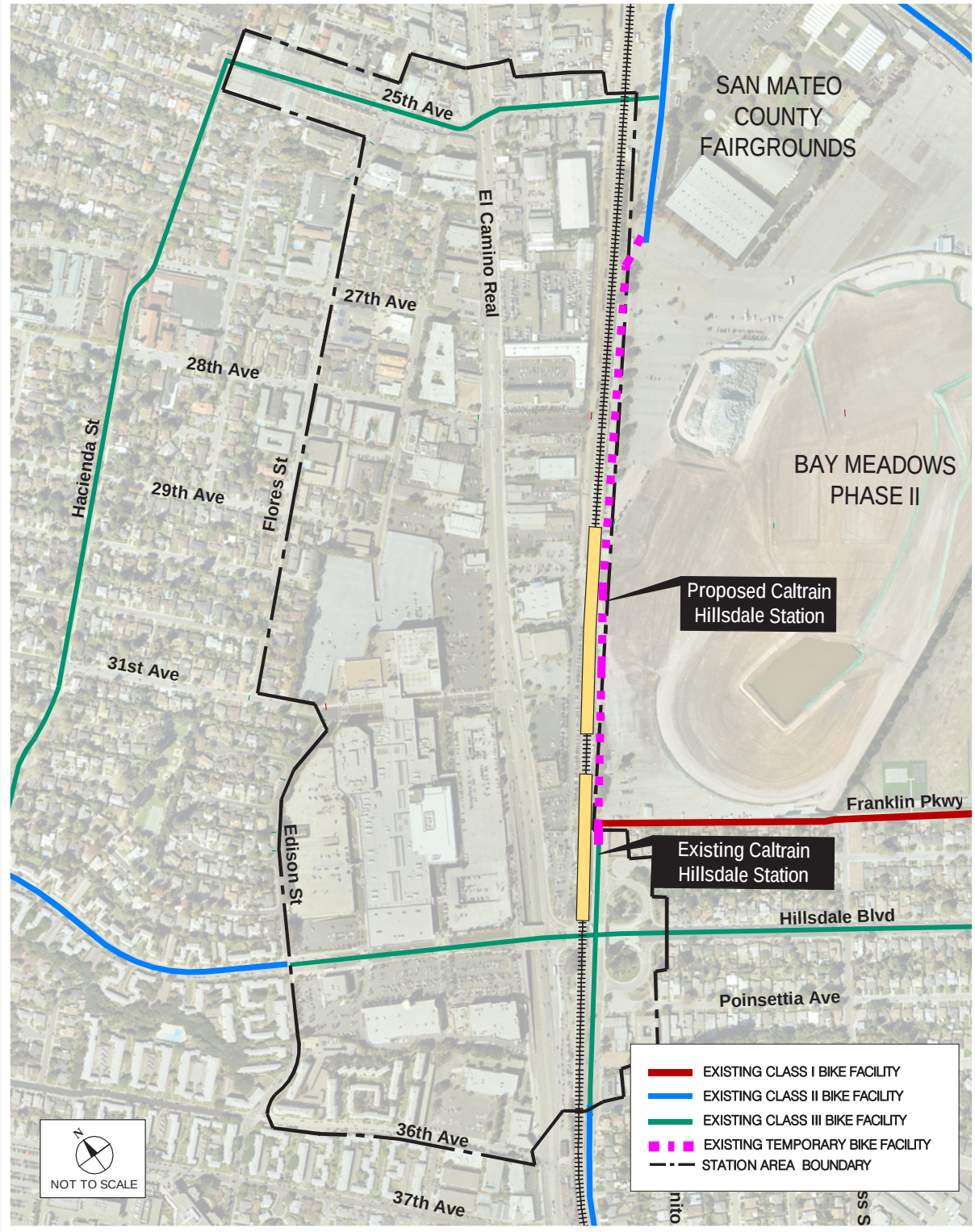
Although El Camino Real and Hillsdale Boulevard provide strong regional and local accessibility, their qualities for efficient automobile movement can be a barrier for movement within the Station Area. El Camino Real's high volume of traffic, multiple travel lanes, and multiple curb cuts are prohibitive to safe pedestrian circulation. Pedestrian crossings are located at signalized intersections, which can be over 1,000 feet apart. Signalized intersections at 25th, 27th, and 28th Avenues contain only one east-west crossing on El Camino Real, forcing some pedestrians to cross three streets instead of one. Further south, the Hillsdale Boulevard interchange with El Camino Real is also a significant barrier, with multiple lanes of potentially high-speed turning vehicles. The high speed, volume, and lack of pedestrian protection create a barrier to successful circulation and connectivity between the west and east.

Although Caltrain is a significant asset to the Station Area and the catalyst for TOD, the railway line is a physical barrier limiting east-west connections. In the future, the proposed High-Speed Rail will require a completely separated right-of-way, creating additional challenges for connectivity.

Finally, the Hillsdale Shopping Center is a large, enclosed development with a largely internal circulation system and limited connections to the streets that surround it.

Connectivity issues aside, there is generally a strong presence of sidewalks throughout the Station Area, ranging from 5 to 7 feet in width. Pedestrian crossings in the immediate vicinity of the Station Area are predominantly comprised of striped crosswalks with pedestrian push buttons. Signalized crossing timings are typically designed by City and Caltrans traffic engineers to provide sufficient time for pedestrians to comfortably clear the intersection; however, median refuges with pedestrian push buttons are provided at several signalized crossings on El Camino Real to accommodate slower

Figure 2-12: Existing Bicycle Facilities



pedestrians. Crossings are generally provided at each signalized intersection approach within the immediate vicinity of the Station Area, with the exception of the following locations:

- El Camino Real / 25th Avenue (no east-west crossing at south leg)
- El Camino Real / 27th Avenue (no east-west crossing at north leg)
- El Camino Real / 28th Avenue (no east west crossing at north leg)

The City is currently developing a Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan, which will include an inventory of existing pedestrian facilities and address pedestrian circulation and connectivity issues at a citywide scale.

The successful Hillsdale Shopping Center has expanded to the south of Hillsdale Boulevard.

F. Demographic and Economic Conditions

From a development perspective, the Station Area enjoys a number of positive attributes. The Hillsdale Caltrain Station represents a unique opportunity for TOD. It is consistently ranked in the top ten for average weekday ridership among Caltrain's 32 stations. New residential and employment-generating uses in the Station Area could further boost passenger activity. The Station Area's proximity to mature residential neighborhoods, the 25th Avenue commercial corridor, the Hillsdale Shopping Center, and Bay Meadows makes it a well-established, credible, and attractive location for new housing and commercial uses.

At the same time, several factors present challenges to development in the Station Area. The Station Area is largely built out, with narrow and shallow parcels, requiring parcel assembly and redevelopment. El Camino Real's strong auto-orientation and complex intersections, like that of Hillsdale Boulevard and El Camino Real, will make it difficult to foster the type of pedestrian-oriented streetscape that complements TOD. The City and future development will also need to address access and circulation issues to fully capitalize on the Station Area's TOD potential.

1. Demographics

The demographics of the Station Area are markedly different from the County and San Francisco Bay Area region. There are fewer family households and smaller household sizes. There are more single-person households, which are generally renting, and the average resident in the Station Area is either younger, 25 to 44 years old, or older, 65 years or older, than the County's average resident. The average household in the Station Area is also less affluent than the region, raising the issues of resident displacement and the production of affordable housing as part of the new development discussion.

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projects the City of San Mateo's population to grow by 22 percent between 2010 and 2030, reaching 116,200 residents in 2030. This projected growth shows the need to plan strategically for housing, particularly given the city's limited land resources. Although population projections by age group are not available at the city level, County and regional projections foresee substantial increases in the persons aged 65 years and older. The aging of the Baby Boomer population is expected to lead to a continued demand for smaller units as elderly households "downsize" to smaller homes near transit and amenities. Demographic trends suggest market potential for smaller units and multi-family housing in the Station Area.

The city and the Station Area, in particular, are characterized by smaller household sizes and a higher proportion of younger households and seniors. In addition, the prevalence of renter households in the Station Area points to a potential for higher density ownership housing to diversify the Area's residential base. The development program described in Chapter 3 of this Plan reflects site conditions and development standards, including parcel size, parking requirements, and building height limits. These may favor the development of several small multi-family developments rather than one or two large projects in the Station Area.

2. Office

Although San Mateo contains the largest share of office space within the County, and studies show strong employment growth, there is limited demand for new office in the Station Area in the current economic environment due to high vacancies and the large amount of planned and proposed development. New office development in the Station Area is best organized in a mixed-use setting or in close proximity to transit, and should target small finance, insurance, real estate, medical, technical, and other professional services tenants.

3. Retail

The City of San Mateo boasts a large and diverse retail market, with stores spanning all price points, store categories, and formats. The city's retail market is organized around six main subareas, including the Hillsdale Shopping Center and 25th Avenue, both of which are located in the Station Area, as well as the Bridgepoint Shopping Center, Downtown, El Camino Real, and the Bay Meadows development. New household spending generated by population growth in the city over the next 20 years will create only limited demand for new retail space, due to the city's extensive and mature retail base. Retail would perform best near the Hillsdale Station, at corner lots along El Camino Real. In those locations, it will need to be designed to accommodate tenant

needs, including parking, appropriate depths and heights, and quality development. The Station Area's narrow and shallow parcels, and the abundance of regional retail in the city, indicate that local-serving convenience retail in a mixed-use format would be most appropriate for the Station Area.